



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
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July 31, 2009

Timothy W. Brennan
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
Executive Director
26 Central Street, Suite 34
West Springfield, MA 01089-2787

Subject: Comments on Draft 2010 - 2013 Transportation Improvement Program
(TIP)

Dear Mr. Brennan:

I wish to submit the following comment on the Draft 2010 – 2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) with regard to state project # 604043, Rte 116 Atkins Corner.

- 1. That state project # 604043, Rte 116 Atkins Corner for \$2,439,289, be funded under Part 1A: Federal Aid Target Projects with Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding instead of being funded under Part 1C: Federal Aid Non-Target Projects with Economic Recovery (ER) funds.***

This project is ready to begin in FY 2010 and should not be delayed over the discussion of Economic Recovery (ER) funds. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), chairman made it quite clear during the July MPO meeting that ER funds are not guaranteed and should not be relied upon to fund projects that are ready to proceed.

This project has the second highest Transportation Evaluation (TEC) rating of the projects proposed on the FY2010 TIP. The Town will be submitting the 100 % plans this month and will complete the principle right-of-way acquisition as well. The current schedule for this project has the Town beginning water and sewer relocations this fall.

The Atkins Corner project as it currently stands is a key improvement to the current regional traffic system, providing the primary north-south access on the eastern side of the Connecticut River. It will also provide another link in the long envisioned bike route from Mount Holyoke College to the other members of the Five College system. This project has also grown into the starting point of the long discussed Atkins Corner Plan in Amherst. As such the plan has garnered wide acceptance and support in the local area and in the Town as a whole. Three of the principle businesses in this area have begun developing their expansion and improvement plans around the completion of this project.

To support these plans Amherst has entered into a tax incentive agreement with one of these employers to provide added incentives to continue moving their expansion plans forward. This agreement covers about 2 million dollars in improvements and the creation of 10 additional jobs for the south Amherst area.

Thank you for your time and I hope you and the other members of the MPO recognize the importance of keeping this project, that was previously scheduled for funding in FY 2010 on the TIP for 2010 and funded by a reliable funding source.

Sincerely;

Guilford Mooring
Superintendent of Public Works



AMHERST *Massachusetts*

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To: Stephanie O' Keefe, Chair, Amherst Select Board
Robert Crowner, Chair, Amherst Public Works Comm.
Frances VanTreese, Chair Amherst Public Transportation & Bicycle Comm.
Jonathan Sheffltz, Chair Amherst Planning Board
Seren Derin, Chair Amherst Disabilities Access Advisory Comm.
Briony Angus, Chair, Amherst Conservation Commission

Cc: Laurence Shaffer, Amherst Town Manager

From: Guilford B. Mooring, Superintendent of Public Works

Subj: Potential delay in the Atkins Corner Intersection Project. State Project # 604043

Due to unclear and conflicting guidance received from the Governor and the Executive Office of Transportation, our Regional Planning Authority, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC); and the Metropolitan Planning Organization, (MPO); prepared a draft Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), that places the Atkins project in jeopardy of not receiving full funding for FY 2010. This confusion has arisen over the uncertainty of additional American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding for our region. In preparing the draft TIP it was assumed that this region would receive the same level of funding for the second ARRA round. What has been made crystal clear by the Executive Office of Transportation at the July MPO meeting is that this region is not guaranteed any additional funding. The Governor's office will use the stimulus money as they see fit.

In order to ensure that the Atkins project stays on the TIP for FY 2010 the TIP needs to be changed to correct the funding shortfall. The portion of the project that is currently proposed to be funded under Part 1C: Federal Aid Non-Target Projects, \$2,439,289, needs to be funded under Part 1A: Federal Aid Target Projects.

The normal process for making this change is at the Joint Transportation Comm. (JTC) before the draft is sent to the MPO. Due to the changing guidance and information from the State and the MPO, the region has used up most of it's time to create a TIP and get public input. This now leaves the 30 day Public Comment period as Amherst's only opportunity to influence the final regional TIP.

During this comment period there are two methods of submitting information. The first is to submit written comments to PVPC. The comments can be sent in writing by mail or email. The second method is to attend the August 19th meeting of the MPO and to let the feelings of the community be known. I am hoping that each of you will discuss with your

boards and committees this issue and decide to send a letter to the MPO asking that this project be given the additional funding through Part 1A: Federal Aid Target Projects. I have enclosed a copy of the letter that I am sending to the MPO as a possible guide. I would also ask that you might consider sending a representative of your group to the August 19th MPO meeting in West Springfield. Unfortunately this process is becoming very political, and any preliminary agreement reached to move the funding source outside the MPO meeting is subject to change during the meeting.

Further information on the TIP can be found at the PVPC web site at:

http://www.pvpc.org/get_involved/docreview.shtml

If your Board or Committee has any questions or other concerns feel free to contact me. Thank you for your time.